

NATIONAL REGISTER
LISTED

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

2. Location

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

State or Federal agency and bureau

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

Date of Action

- ☐ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ☐ removed from the National Register
- ☐ other. (explain:)

Buffalo Hotel
Name of Property

Finney County, Kansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed
in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter Categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

VACANT/NOT IN USE

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation: CONCRETE/STONE: Limestone

Walls: CONCRETE/STONE: Limestone

WOOD

Roof: ASPHALT

Other:

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Buffalo Hotel
Name of Property

Finney County, Kansas
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☒ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1886-1957

Significant Dates

1886

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Charles Jesse (Buffalo) Jones

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

JH Stevens and CL Thompson, architects

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society

Buffalo Hotel
Name of Property

Finney County, Kansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	4	3	3	5	3	8	9	4	2	0	3	6	5	5
Zone	Easting				Northing										
2															

3															
Zone	Easting				Northing										
4															

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Christy Davis
Organization Davis Preservation Date 6/6/2007
Street & number 909 1/2 Kansas Ave Telephone 785-234-5053
City or town Topeka State KS Zip code 66612

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Name Dean Ryan
Street & number 117 Grant Avenue Telephone 620-275-9614
City or town Garden City State KS Zip code 67846

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1 **Buffalo Hotel**
Finney County, Kansas

Narrative Description

Setting

The Buffalo Hotel is located at 111-117 Grant Avenue (formerly 112-118 Grant Avenue), a street that bisects Block 8 of the Jones Addition of Garden City, Kansas (pop. 28451), Finney County, Kansas. Grant Avenue angles to the northwest from the city's north/south Main Street on the north end of downtown Garden City. The property is bounded by Laurel Avenue on the north, adjacent buildings on the east and west, and Grant Avenue on the south. The building's front elevation follows the angle of Grant Avenue. The rear elevation follows the line of the east/west-running Laurel Street.

Exterior

Overall – The building is of structural masonry construction, with an exterior of limestone quarried near Kendall, Kansas. The front elevation's principal material is small tooled ashlar limestone laid in regular courses and finished with beaded mortar joints. Tooled and hand-carved stonework, including pilasters, lintels, sills, eave brackets, dentils and entablature, decorate the front elevation. The other three elevations are rubble limestone covered with stucco. The stucco on the east and north sides dates to ca. 1930. The stucco on the west side dates to ca. 1970s. Most of the windows have been covered over. However, most of the historic windows, which are both 2/2 and 1/1 wood sash, are intact and visible from the building's interior.

Front (South) Elevation - The symmetrical front elevation is 89' wide and divided into five bays, a centered entrance bay flanked on each side by two storefront bays. Each of the four storefront bays has a cast-iron storefront frame with ca. 1970s aluminum storefront windows and opaque enameled panels at the transoms and kickplates. The centered entrance bay has a non-historic single door with a multi-pane transom above. Historic photos indicate that each of the storefront entrances historically featured centered double doors flanked on each side by a plate glass storefront window with a multi-pane glass transom above. Each of the storefront bays has three windows on both the second and third floors. The narrow second-floor windows, which are blocked in, have a continuous sill and have hand-relief-carved segmented arch-topped lintels with decorative keystones. The third-floor windows, also blocked in, are rectangular with continuous sill and decoratively hand-carved hood molds/lintels. Decorative hand-carved stone pilasters delineate the central entrance bay, which has one window on each of the second and third floors. Similar pilasters enframe the front elevation's outer corners. A carved stone entablature, with geometric frieze, decorative eave brackets, and simple cornice, tops the building. A carved stone cornice pediment, with a bison relief, has been removed from the center of the façade.

Side (East) Elevation – The east elevation measures 112'. The south end of the building's east elevation is scarcely visible from the ground. An adjacent two-story stone building, Jones' 1885 "Marble Block," obscures approximately 2 ½ stories of the Buffalo Hotel's east elevation, which is covered with stucco. The north end of the east elevation, which has exposed rubble limestone, is visible from the northeast. There are no extant openings on the east elevation.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Buffalo Hotel
Finney County, Kansas

Section number 7 Page 2

Side (West) Elevation – The west elevation measures 75'. The first story of the building's west elevation is obscured by an adjacent one-story building. There are no extant window openings on the exposed upper two stories of the west elevation, which have been stuccoed.

Rear (North) Elevation – The rear elevation, which faces Laurel Street, measures 96.5' and sits at a 30 degree angle from the front elevation. Like the side elevations, the rear elevation has been stuccoed. There are rear entrances that correspond to the four storefronts. There are eight window openings on each of the upper two stories. The window openings on the seventh window bay open to a fire escape. All the windows on the upper two floors are closed-in.

Roof – The roof is flat with an angled skylight that spans the interior two storefront bays from east to west. The skylight provides natural lighting to the interior via a central two-story atrium.

Interior

Overall – The historic materials on the first-floor interior are obscured with non-historic materials. Despite alterations tied to the building's conversion from hotel to apartments, the central stair, second and third floors retain a high degree of architectural integrity. Extant historic features include baseboards, plaster walls and radiused plaster window returns, window sash, window trim, wood wainscoting, 2-story open atrium, stairs, transomed door openings, and paneled doors. Other features, including wallpaper, bathrooms and kitchens, date to the building's World War II apartment conversion.

First Floor – The first floor is divided into four 25'-wide stores. The first of these (from left to right), now a law office, occupies the space that served as the hotel dining room. The second, now vacant, occupies the space originally occupied by the hotel office and billiard hall. The third and fourth stores, also now vacant, occupy the space originally used as a drug store and clothing store – later converted to a hardware store. The storefront spaces are finished with contemporary materials including stud and gypsum board partition walls, suspended acoustical tile ceilings, VCT base, and carpeting. However, many of the historic materials, including tongue-and-groove ceilings and crown molding, remain intact. Plans call for the removal of non-historic fabric and preservation of historic materials.

Second Floor – The second floor was originally accessible via both the central stair and a stair rising from the hotel lobby to the 2nd-floor atrium. When the building was no longer used as a hotel, the lobby stair was closed in to create a lease-able first-floor space and the second floor was accessible only from the central stair, accessible from the center entrance bay. The stair opens to a two-story atrium space in the building's center. On the north end of the atrium, there are two open stairs leading to the third floor, one to the west end and the other to the east. The 2nd-floor atrium opens to the main stair on the south and double-loaded north/south corridors on the east and west. A door in the center of the atrium's north wall, between the two stairs, opens to a wide room that lies between the stairs and the north corridor. The north wall of the south corridor has a railed opening that opens the south hall to the atrium. The north/south corridors terminate at

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3 **Buffalo Hotel**
Finney County, Kansas

double-loaded east/west corridors on the north and south ends of the building. The corridors form a rectangle around the atrium. On the southeast corner of the corridor, there is a hall that historically opened to the adjoining building, originally also used for guest rooms. There is a similar hall on the southwest corner that terminates at a window. It is likely that this hall was extended with the goal of future expansion to the west. The larger spaces, generally concentrated on the hotel's north and south ends, were converted to apartments during World War II. Smaller spaces, such as those adjoining the atrium, appear to maintain their original configuration.

Third Floor – The layout of the third floor is similar to that of the second floor. The third floor is accessed only via the stairs rising from the second-floor atrium. As on the second floor, the larger spaces on the third floor were converted to apartments during World War II. Smaller spaces, such as those rooms adjacent to the atrium, and other small spaces on the east end, retain their historic configuration.¹

¹ More descriptive details can be found in the following document: Carol Hagen, *Preservation and Planning Project: An Inventory of Historic Properties in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas, Third Session, a Comprehensive Survey for The Buffalo Hotel*. This project, completed in August 1995, was funded through a Historic Preservation Fund grant from the Kansas State Historical Society.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Buffalo Hotel
Finney County, Kansas

Statement of Significance

Introduction

The Buffalo Hotel is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the early history of Garden City (pop. 28,451) and as a nineteenth century hotel, under Criterion B for its association with town founder and western legend Charles Jesse (Buffalo) Jones, and under Criterion C as an example of Italianate commercial architecture. The story of the hotel, and its developer Charles Jesse (Buffalo) Jones illustrates the broader early history of Garden City.

Garden City – Bison, Boom, Bust and Bounceback

When the Buffalo Hotel was constructed in 1886, Garden City was on its way to becoming a trade center for southwest Kansas. The first white inhabitants in the area were hunters who killed bison principally for their hides, and wranglers, who corralled and broke wild horses. In 1873, the Kansas Legislature designated the county, which then excluded Garden Township, "Sequoyah County."²

The land in Section 18 was first surveyed in 1878 after which area pioneers JR and WD Fulton each claimed a quarter section. The other two quarters were claimed by JA Stevens and CJ Jones, who famously obtained the disputed northwest quarter for \$90 and a gold watch. According to lore, the town came to be called "Garden City" after a "tramp" recommended the name to WD Fulton's wife.³ The new town's Main Street ran north to south, bisecting the section.

Despite the founders' early efforts to promote the town, there were only four buildings, including Fulton's Occidental Hotel, by the end of 1878. Garden City's fate changed, however, when CJ Jones negotiated with the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Rail Line to place a depot in the town. As part of the agreement, the railroad required that the town be re-platted to place Main Street perpendicular to the rail line. By the end of 1879, the newly re-platted town was home to 40 buildings. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, as evidenced by historic photographs, wood-frame false-front commercial buildings predominated. Many of these early wood-frame buildings burned in a devastating 1883 fire.⁴

Town boosters took extraordinary measures to sell lots and attract new residents. In Spring 1879, former nurseryman CJ Jones shipped in a carload of trees from Sterling and planted them along his lots on Jones Avenue to attract buyers.⁵ Before this, WD Fulton's Occidental Hotel boasted the town's only tree. The

²History of Finney County, Kansas (Garden City: Finney County Historical Society, c. 1950), 9.

³Leola Howard Blanchard, *Conquest of Southwest Kansas: A history and thrilling stories of frontier life in the state of Kansas* (Wichita, Kansas: Wichita Eagle Press, 1931).

⁴Craig Miner, *West of Wichita: Settling the High Plains of Kansas, 1865-1890* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 98.

⁵Carol Hagen, *Preservation and Planning Project: An Inventory of Historic Properties in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas, Third Session, a Comprehensive Survey for The Buffalo Hotel* (Garden City, 1995), 8.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5 **Buffalo Hotel**
Finney County, Kansas

railroad helped attract speculators and farmers, who, beginning in 1883, could purchase land the Garden City US Land Office, headed by CJ Jones, and could tap into ditch irrigation systems developed by Jones and others. By 1884, Garden City was home to 1569 residents and there were 2905 acres of Finney County land under cultivation, in addition to those used for cattle ranching.⁶

The growing number of cultivated acres illustrates the area's evolution from hunting center to agricultural hub. In areas of agricultural dominance, a city's future lay in its ability to gain county seat designation. Townboosters throughout the west recognized this and often took extreme measures to secure county seat status. Although Garden City was the likely county seat, Jones took no chances, commissioning the construction of a county courthouse on his property before the countywide vote. In fact, Jones hosted cornerstone ceremonies at both the courthouse and his Buffalo Hotel on the same day. The city, whose population had ballooned from 378 to 8000 in fewer than ten years, easily won its bid for county seat over Sherlock and Pierceville.⁷

Garden City's county-seat designation coincided with a statewide real estate boom. Between 1885 and 1887, speculators filed 50 additions to the City of Garden City. On the same day Jones hosted cornerstone ceremonies at the courthouse and the Buffalo Hotel, he auctioned off \$31,000 in lots in Garden City and Hartford. Soon thereafter, Jones completed both his Marble Block and the Buffalo Block on Grant Avenue. At the height of the boom, in late 1885, the *Garden City Irrigator* touted the city's achievements.⁸

There is no longer room for any town west of Wichita to dispute Garden City's claims to the metropolis of the great West. We are pushing along at such rapid strides that there is no possibility of any town ever coming within hailing distance of us. Our future is made. We have the finest country in the land and we are reaping the benefit of it. Our citizens are not selling lots and sticking the money down in their pockets. They are putting the money in valuable improvements, which shows to the whole world that those who are best-posted in this region are not afraid to make investments.⁹

Perhaps investors should have been more afraid. But boosters like Jones, and his rival and fellow town founder JA Stevens, kept building. Soon after the Buffalo Block was completed, Stevens built the Grant Block, which effectively isolated Jones' buildings from the growing number of permanent structures on Main Street.¹⁰ Stevens appeared to have out-maneuvered Jones with his construction of the Opera House and Windsor Hotel on North Main.

By the time the Buffalo Hotel was completed, the impending bust was on the horizon. The first sign of what was to come came in the form of the Blizzard of 1886, in which an estimated 75% of cattle in ranching counties were lost and, consequently, many ranches went bankrupt. Railroad over-expansion and

⁶ *History of Finney County*, 9.

⁷ Miner, *West of Wichita*, 184.

⁸ *Garden City Irrigator*, 12 September 1885.

⁹ *Garden City Irrigator*, 19 September 1885.

¹⁰ Carol Hagen, *Preservation and Planning Project*, 7-8.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6 **Buffalo Hotel**
Finney County, Kansas

foreclosure on mortgaged farm and ranch property also impacted Kansas communities, particularly county seats which relied heavily on agriculture-related trade. In 1890, eastern banks foreclosed on both Jones' Buffalo Hotel and Stevens' Windsor Hotel.

Stricken with blizzards, drought and foreclosure, farmers fled western Kansas. Between 1887 and 1891, the population of Finney County plummeted from an estimated 10,000 to 5294.¹¹ As in many Kansas communities, the population decline was further exacerbated by the Cherokee Strip Run in 1893. By 1900, the town's population had plunged to 2124.¹² Among those who left during the bust was CJ Jones.

The city languished until the first decade of the twentieth century, when the population partially rebounded to nearly 4000.¹³ The comeback was tied in part to the region's role in the production and processing of sugar beets. In 1901, the Kansas Legislature began subsidizing sugar beet production.¹⁴ In 1907, investors constructed a \$1,000,000 sugar beet factory, which processed the crops produced by federally subsidized farmers. The factory was turning out 200,000 pounds of refined sugar each day by 1912.¹⁵ Sugar Beet production remained a key industry through World War II. It declined after government subsidies ended in 1957. The sugar beet industry brought migrant farm workers Mexican immigrants to the area.¹⁶

In part because of an influx of immigrant workers, Garden City's population had nearly doubled again to 7116 by 1930;¹⁷ still, it did not again reach its 1887 population until after World War II. After the war, Garden City became a livestock center, with feed lots and, beginning in the 1960s, packing plants. Today, the population stands at nearly 30,000.¹⁸

Charles Jesse Jones (1844-1919)

Charles Jesse (Buffalo) Jones, the town founder who developed the Buffalo Hotel, was a driving force behind Garden City's early success. Jones' story is one of great accomplishment juxtaposed with great calamity – a story that parallels in many ways the early history of the community he loved and relentlessly promoted. Jones was born in Illinois on January 31, 1844. In 1866, after attending Wesleyan University, Jones moved to Troy, Kansas, where he married Martha J. Walton in 1869 and entered the nursery business. In the 1870s,

¹¹ Miner, *West of Wichita*, 212.

¹² 1900 US Census.

¹³ 1910 US Census.

¹⁴ Avila, Henry J., "The History of Mexican American Migration in Southwestern Kansas," *Kansas History* 20:1 (Spring 1997).

¹⁵ Frank W. Blackmar, "Garden City," *Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc.* (Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912).

¹⁶ Avila, "The History of Mexican American Migration."

¹⁷ 1930 US Census.

¹⁸ 2000 US Census.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Buffalo Hotel
Finney County, Kansas

Section number 8 Page 7

his stock was wiped out in a grasshopper plague. Soon thereafter, Jones moved his family to Sterling, Kansas, where, according to legend, he became a master hunter and bison skinner.¹⁹

An antelope hunt was what first brought Jones to Garden City in January 1879. Recognizing the young man's promotional skills, Garden City pioneers encouraged CJ Jones to purchase the disputed northwest corner of Garden City. Their confidence in Jones paid off in 1879 when he successfully negotiated with the Santa Fe Railroad to locate a depot in the new town. By 1880, Jones had moved his family – including his wife Martha and sons Willie G. (then 10) and Charles G. (then 2) to Sequoyah County and had entered the lucrative real estate business.²⁰

As a speculator, Jones' livelihood depended upon his ability to publicize and build up the new community. He worked tirelessly to ensure the budding community's success – running a ferry while a new bridge was being built; commissioning irrigation ditches to supply water to arid Finney County farmland; planting countless trees to improve the marketability of town lots; and developing permanent structures, including the Marble Block, Buffalo Hotel, and county courthouse. Jones, who gained a reputation for being "able and shrewd, upright and fair in all his dealings," served as Garden City's first mayor and first state representative.²¹

Like many hunters, CJ Jones gained an appreciation for the game he hunted, shifting his focus to animal conservation. He earned his nickname "Buffalo Jones" through his efforts to protect American Bison from extinction. In the late nineteenth century, Jones collected 57 bison calves from the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles to populate a Garden City-area game refuge. In September 1891, Jones delivered 10 bison to the Prince of Wales, who dubbed him the "Buffalo King."²² Later, Jones' conservation efforts took him to the Arctic Circle. When President Theodore Roosevelt sought the first game warden for Yellowstone National Park in 1901, lifelong dedicated Republican Buffalo Jones seemed the logical choice. After serving in the post, Jones established a ranch and game preserve near the Grand Canyon.

While on safari in Africa in 1914, Jones contracted malaria. He convalesced at his daughter's home in Topeka, where he died on October 1, 1919. By the time of his death, Buffalo Jones had become a western cult hero, immortalized in both historical and fictionalized accounts, including Zane Grey's *Roping Lions in the Grand Canyon* (1924), Easton and Brown's *Lord of Beasts* (1961), and the autobiographical *Buffalo Jones' forty years of adventure* (1899).²³

¹⁹ Phillip Thomas, *Buffalo Jones: Citizen of the Kansas Frontier* (Garden City: Finney County Historical Society, 2004).

²⁰ 1880 U. S. Census. *History of Finney County*, 9.

²¹ *Garden City Irrigator*, 1 January 1886.

²² Carol Hagen, *Preservation and Planning Project*, 14-15.

²³ Text written on the base of the bronze statue of C.J. "Buffalo" Jones, located on the grounds of the Finney County Courthouse, 425 N. 8th Street, Garden City, Kansas Dedicated July 4, 1979, Buffalo Jones Memorial Committee, Finney County Historical Society. Carol Hagen, *Preservation and Planning Project*, 14.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8 Buffalo Hotel
Finney County, Kansas

The Buffalo Hotel

CJ Jones' Buffalo Hotel helped feed the legend. The hotel had the potential to both directly and indirectly benefit the town founder. As noted in an 1888 promotional piece about the Buffalo Hotel, "A first-class, well conducted hotel [was] one of the greatest advantages to a community."²⁴ In budding western towns, hotels served as both economic and business centers. To visitors, they demonstrated a community's character and level of sophistication or lack thereof. Before 1886, Garden City had only one hotel, a 1 ½ story house converted from the town's first building, the home of William Fulton, to the town's first hotel, known as "Garden City Hotel" or "Occidental Hotel."²⁵ Jones' hotel would provide housing to transients, offer a meeting place for locals, and attract newcomers and tourists, which included Russian royalty.

The Buffalo Hotel was part of Jones' effort to focus the community's commercial activity along his Grant Avenue. Jones opened his Marble Block, an adjacent 2 ½ story commercial block, in October 1885 and soon thereafter completed the Buffalo Hotel.²⁶ To design both buildings, Jones called on Architects JH Stevens and CL Thompson who hailed from Topeka. Stevens was born in Centerville, Indiana in October 1845. He studied at Earlham College. Stevens and Thompson were apparently acquainted before becoming business partners, enlisting for the Civil War on the same day. In addition to the Buffalo Hotel, Stevens and Thompson designed the Jones Marble Block, Carter's stone block, county courthouse, Southard Block, school, and Stevens Block. Ironically, Stevens and Thompson also designed the Windsor Hotel, the building commissioned by Jones' rival JA Stevens that put the Buffalo Hotel out of business.²⁷

Stevens and Thompson, who according to a promotional piece specialized in stone construction, chose limestone as the exterior material for both the Marble Block and Buffalo Hotel. Although by the 1880s, Flint Hills limestone had gained a reputation for quality and color, the pair chose locally quarried limestone, from a quarry near Kendall, Kansas. This type of limestone, which had a less chalky whiter appearance than other stone in the state, was often referred to as "marble." Thus, Jones' first building, like others in the state such as Wellington's Smith Building, was known as the "Marble Block." The stone was quarried, cut into large pieces and hauled to Garden City on flat rail cars.²⁸

The townspeople fervently followed every step of the construction of both the Marble Block and Buffalo Hotel in the local papers, which praised Jones' tremendous investments. On August 6, 1885, the *Garden City Irrigator* reported that "The front of the Jones block is now being placed in position. The front is composed of beautifully carved stone columns, iron pillars and large plate glass. Mr. Jones is debating in his mind whether to put his other building adjoining this one, or across the avenue, where the livery stable stands."²⁹ By September 2, 1885, as reported in the *Garden City Sentinel*, Jones had begun construction of the hotel: "The rock is being put on the ground as rapidly as possible for a three story stone hotel on Euclid Avenue, and

²⁴ "The Buffalo Hotel," Garden City Clippings, Kansas State Historical Society, 978.1 F49, v. 1, pg 96.

²⁵ Blanchard, *Conquest of SW Kansas*.

²⁶ Hagen, 7.

²⁷ *Garden City Irrigator*, Special Edition, January 1886.

²⁸ Hagen, 7.

²⁹ *Garden City Irrigator*, 6 August 1885.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Buffalo Hotel
Finney County, Kansas

Section number 8 Page 9

work will be commenced at once. Hurrah for C. J. Jones!"³⁰ With a crowd of onlookers calling his name, Jones set the cornerstone for the \$40,000 Buffalo Hotel structure on September 12, 1885.³¹

Although the building's shell featured time-tested masonry construction techniques, its interior was filled with the latest technological gadgets and stylish furnishings. Innovations included a "system of electric call bells," an electric fire alarm, a laundry, and a wind-powered water tank for fire suppression and water closets.³² Jones spared no expense furnishing the hotel, paying out \$10,000 for Queen Anne furniture and Body Brussels carpets.³³

The hotel building was completed and opened on October 12, 1885, just one month after Jones set the cornerstone. The first floor housed a stairway, office (lobby), dining room, billiard hall, sample room, kitchen, and laundry. The two easternmost storefronts housed a drug store and clothing store.³⁴ According to reports, there were 80 guest rooms on the second and third floors. The building connected through an opening off the second floor hallway to the adjacent Marble Block, which, according to the 1887 Sanborn Map, housed some of the eighty guest rooms as well as offices. To manage the hotel, Jones hired Ben Phillips, who by 1885 had both owned and managed hotels for fourteen years. Among the hotels Phillips owned when hired to manage the Buffalo were Oxford's Oxford House, Wellington's Phillips House, and Medicine Lodge's Grand.

The Buffalo Hotel's heyday lasted only a few short years. In 1887, Jones' rival John Stevens announced plans for a four-story hotel and opera house on Main Street. Like the Buffalo, Stevens' Windsor Hotel was designed by Stevens and Thompson architects. But this hotel was built on a much larger scale. Although the newspapers declared that the Windsor signified an "epoch in the building of Garden City and the beginning of a new era of prosperity," a dark period in the city's history was dawning.³⁵ Plagued with drought, depression, and colossal population loss, the community entered a decades-long period of decline.

Jones' vision for the Buffalo Hotel was cut short. When the Windsor Hotel opened, the Buffalo Hotel was converted to a rooming house. When hard times made it impossible for the heavily indebted Jones and Stevens to pay mortgages, both the Windsor and the Buffalo went into foreclosure. Over time, as Garden City's economy rebounded, the Buffalo Hotel was re-occupied. In 1892, the two westernmost storefronts housed a restraint and printing office; the southern two storefronts housed an implements business. Silas Schulman moved his plumbing and hardware business into the building in 1895. In 1897, the hotel became home to the city's first library. By 1899, although the second floor continued to serve as a rooming house, the third floor was vacant. The first floor housed a grocery and tin works, as well as Schulman's hardware store. By 1905, Schulman had expanded into the eastern two storefronts. A grocery and express office occupied the western two storefronts in 1920. In 1922, Frank M. Dunn, John F. Walters, Raimon G. Walters and Silas Schulman's son Sibel purchased the Buffalo Block from Charles E. Gibson. It was the first time the block had

³⁰ *Garden City Sentinel*, 2 September 1885.

³¹ *Garden City Irrigator*, 12 September 1885.

³² *Garden City Irrigator*, 3 April 1886.

³³ 1886-1887 Finney Co Directory, Finney County Historical Society.

³⁴ 1887 Sanborn Map.

³⁵ 20 November 1889, <http://www.gardencity.net/windsor/history/>

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 10 **Buffalo Hotel**
Finney County, Kansas

been locally owned since Jones lost it to creditors three decades earlier. By 1929 the building housed a tire/service store and an express office.³⁶ The first floor was a base of operations for his irrigation business. The second and third floors were offices, apartments, and sleeping rooms. FA Myers bought the west half of the hotel in 1925 for his Garden City Creamery. The business passed down to Myers' son Merle and grandson Carl. Until 1943, there was a soda fountain there.³⁷ During World War II, the sleeping rooms were given a facelift and converted to apartments.³⁸

Although the first floor has been continuously occupied as commercial and office space, the second and third floors have been vacant for decades. Current plans call for the rehabilitation of the first floor as a restaurant and brewery – and rehabilitation of the second and third floors for housing.

Nineteenth-Century Hotels

The Buffalo Hotel is being nominated in part as an example of a late nineteenth-century hotel. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, hotels like the Buffalo Hotel, particularly those in the west, were economic and social centers. In their study of the subject, Raitz and Jones argue that hotels were better indicators of a city's "personality and progress" than government buildings and churches.³⁹

In a community's early years, hotels were also stage coach stops.⁴⁰ The Southern Stage and Express stopped in front of the Buffalo Hotel in 1887.⁴¹ They also provided places for traveling salesmen to exhibit their wares. Like many nineteenth century hotels, the Buffalo Hotel had sample rooms on its first floor. Before apartment buildings, hotels served as temporary housing for prospective residents and bachelor entrepreneurs. Hotels also often housed a town's only commercial dining establishments, such as the first-floor restaurant at the Buffalo.

Because of the essential role they played in community life, their uninterrupted operation was imperative to the livelihood of a town. The loss of a hotel, through fire or natural disaster, was not uncommonly met with strong calls for reconstruction, often subsidized by business leaders and volunteer laborers.⁴² In light of the labor necessary to construct a two-story masonry building in the nineteenth century, the efforts to complete the Buffalo Hotel in a few short months were extraordinary. In the early twentieth century, many modern fireproof hotels, such as the Hotel Ripley in Newton, Kansas, were financed through the sale of stock to

³⁶ *Garden City Telegram*, 7 December 1922.

³⁷ *Garden City Telegram*, 2 January 1988.

³⁸ *Garden City Telegram*, 25 November 1969.

³⁹ Karl B. Raitz and John Paul Jones, III, "The City Hotel as Landscape Artifact and Community Symbol," *Journal of Cultural Geography*. V. 9, 1988, 28.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Garden City Telegram*, 14 March 1887.

⁴² Raitz and Jones, 22.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 11 **Buffalo Hotel**
Finney County, Kansas

community leaders. Investment was promoted as a civic duty by local newspapers who printed the names of stockholders on the front page.

By the 1930s, the luster of community hotels had begun to fade – due to a number of dynamics. Restaurants that were independent of hotels fed the town's residents. Apartment buildings, which became common after World War I, housed temporary residents and unmarried folk. Movie theaters entertained broad audiences. And roadside motels, situated along highways, which had begun to take precedence over the railroads, catered to travelers. As a result, many small-town hotels lost their appeal. These trends played out in the eventual demise of Buffalo's competitor, the Windsor Hotel, which closed its doors in the 1970s.

Italianate Architecture

In addition to its significance as a nineteenth-century hotel, the Buffalo Hotel is significant as an example of commercial Italianate architecture. The Italianate Style was popular nationwide from 1840 through the boom years of the mid-1880s, spurred on by popular pattern books such as those published by Andrew Jackson Downing. The style was applied to both residential and commercial architecture. Most residential examples in Kansas pre-date 1885, by which time Queen Anne had come to predominate. Commercial examples, such as the Buffalo Hotel, were built in Kansas through the boom years of the 1880s. Character-defining features of commercial examples include the following features found on the façade of the Buffalo Hotel: symmetrical massing; eave brackets; narrow window openings, some with arched tops surrounded by hood molds; cornices; 2/2 windows; and narrow supports and columns.⁴³

Summary

The Buffalo Hotel is a significant intact example of late-nineteenth-century architecture that interprets the early history of Garden City and one of its town founders, Buffalo Jones.

⁴³ See McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* and Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 12

Buffalo Hotel
Finney County, Kansas

Bibliography

- Avila, Henry J., "The History of Mexican American Migration in Southwestern Kansas." Kansas History 20:1 (Spring 1997).
- Blackmar, Frank W. Kansas: a cyclopedia of state history, embracing events, institutions, industries, counties, cities, towns, prominent persons, etc. Chicago: Standard Publishing Co., 1912.
- Blanchard, Leola Howard. Conquest of Southwest Kansas: A history and thrilling stories of frontier life in the State of Kansas. Wichita, Kansas: Wichita Eagle Press, 1931.
- "The Buffalo Hotel." Garden City Clippings, Kansas State Historical Society, 978.1 F49, v. 1, pg. 96.
- Finney County Historical Society. History of Finney County, Kansas. Garden City, Kansas: Finney County Historical Society, c. 1950.
- Garden City Irrigator.
- Garden City Sentinel.
- Garden City Telegram.
- Hagen, Carol. Preservation and Planning Project: An Inventory of Historic Properties in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. Third Session, a Comprehensive Survey for The Buffalo Hotel. Garden City, 1995.
- Longstreth, Richard. The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture, 2nd ed. Walnut Creek, California: Alta Mira Press, 2000.
- McAlester, Virginia and Lee. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York: Albert A. Knopf, 1998.
- Miner, Craig. Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002.
- Miner, Craig. West of Wichita: Settling the High Plains of Kansas, 1865-1890. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1986.
- Raitz, Karl B., and John Paul Jones III. "The City Hotel as Landscape Artifact and Community Symbol." Journal of Cultural Geography 9 (1988): 17-36
- Thomas, Phillip. Buffalo Jones: Citizen of the Kansas Frontier. Garden City: Finney County Historical Society, 2004.
- U. S. Federal Census, 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 13 **Buffalo Hotel**
Finney County, Kansas

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located at 111-117 Grant Avenue (formerly 112-118 Grant Avenue). The property lies in the CJ Jones Addition to Garden City, Block 8 OP, west half of Lot 22 and Lots 23-26 of Block 8. The property faces Grant Avenue. Its rear elevation is bounded by Laurel Avenue on the north and adjacent buildings on the east and west.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes the 4 ½ lots on which the Buffalo Hotel sits.

Photo Log

Property: Buffalo Hotel, Garden City, Finney County, KS
Location of Digital files: State Historic Preservation Office

- Photo 1: Historic Photo, front elevation date unknown, photographer unknown
- Photo 2: Front elevation, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 3: Rear elevation, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 4: Storefronts, front elevation, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 5: Closeup of carved stone sign, front elevation, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 6: Central main staircase, interior, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 7: Atrium, interior, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 8: Atrium from 3rd floor, interior, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 9: 2nd floor railing, interior, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 10: Intact window sash behind boarded front elevation openings, interior, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 11: 3rd floor hallway showing door and windows, interior, May 2007, Christy Davis
- Photo 12: Typical hallway, interior, May 2007, Christy Davis

Buffalo Hotel
Finney County, KS
Zone 14
335389 E
4303655 N

